

Northwest Austin News

SERVING THE NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY

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October 2023



Fall into Fall

By NWACA BOARD

It's really good to welcome the slightly cooler weather.

We're looking forward to welcoming you at these NWACA events in the coming weeks:

- Saturday, October 7 – From 8 a.m. to noon, NWACA members throughout the neighborhood will be holding garage sales. Watch for the list of sales addresses on www.nwaca.org, on Craigslist, and in the Austin American Statesman that weekend. You'll see signs about the sales throughout the neighborhood, including small yellow directional signs near the specific sale sites. Treasures await you!
- Saturday, October 21 – The annual NWACA Electronics and Styrofoam collection event will be held



BUSY FALL, 2

Anderson High Homecoming Parade 2023



More photos by Lynette Haaland, Northwest Austin News, on pages 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17.



“Inheritance” scam squashed by savvy homeowners

By LYNETTE HAALAND
Northwest Austin News

A retired couple was shocked in mid July after they got a knock on their door from people with a moving truck saying they had just inherited their house in Steiner Ranch.

On Tuesday, July 18, the Steiner couple had just finished dinner and heard a knock around 7:30 p.m.

“It’s not common to have someone knock at our door because we’re in a gated community,” she said. The couple moved from Houston to Steiner 10 years ago because they

wanted to live at Lake Austin and be closer to children and grandchildren in Cedar Park.

That July night, her husband looked out the window and saw a man standing there. Thinking it was an Amazon delivery man, he went to the door.

SCAM, 2

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SCAM, FROM 1

“He had on gloves, so he thought, you know, it was the delivery guy,” she said. The couple did not want to share their names after this incident.

Once they opened the door, they noticed in addition to the man, there was also a lady in a sundress. The two strangers were younger, in their 30s or 40s, and appeared to be nicely dressed. The lady spoke and after she confirmed the address, she then said, “Well, I just inherited this house.”

The Steiner couple was taken aback. “No you didn’t,” the homeowner said. The lady then goes on to verify his name. “If you think you inherited this house, come back with your lawyer,” the husband said. “You need to have a lawyer call me.”

By that point, the older couple was feeling uncomfortable and asked the strangers to leave. “He asked her three times to leave the property and she just answered back, ‘I inherited this house.’”

The homeowner then grabbed her phone and said, “I’m calling 911. You need to get off my property.”

It was then that the Steiner couple noticed the white Penske moving truck parked in their driveway, it was backed in. They saw two other older people standing in the driveway near the truck.

This group of at least four people was not leaving so she called 911.

The dispatcher asked for details, descriptions and ages.

“I said we feel very threatened. I said there’s four of them and only two of us and we’ve asked them to leave and they’re not,” said the homeowner. “Basically more or less the whole time I’m on the call with 911, they are still sitting there... and finally we see them leave.”

Then the dispatcher asked which direction they went. The homeowner shared, “There’s only one way in and one way out of Steiner. If they turn right they’re going to end up at the lake. If they turn left, they’ll go to 620.”

Travis County Sheriff’s Office arrived at the house about 10 minutes later

while another officer pulled the moving truck over before they got out of Steiner.

TCSO detained the people in the truck and asked how they got into the gated community. They said the HOA gave them the code, but during the investigation afterwards, TCSO found out that that was not the case.

While they still had the people in the Penske truck detained, the TCSO officer said, “Show me the (house) key.” And the lady in the sundress says, “We don’t have a key.” The officer said, “How are you going to get in?” And she said, “It’s not against the law to break into your own home.”

“She had an answer for everything but it didn’t line up. It just didn’t make sense,” the officer said.

A criminal trespassing report was filed and then if they step one foot on the property again, they can be arrested immediately, the officer said.

After the investigation which took more than a week, TCSO shared that four separate attempts were made July 13 through July 17 to get the gate code from the HOA. The nefarious people not only called but sent emails with attached deeds to make it appear the property was theirs but the deeds had different addresses nowhere close to Steiner Ranch.

The officer told the Steiner couple that one of the men had an ID with the same name as the husband and that he suspects that “they were hoping the couple wasn’t home, then they were going to break in and if police showed up, they would show the ID.”

TCSO spokesperson Kristen Dark shared, “The homeowners in this situation did precisely the right thing. They called 911 immediately, and deputies were able to assess the situation.”

The couple still loves Steiner Ranch and their home but continue to be a bit rattled by the situation.

“As it was unfolding, it was a little bit traumatizing. We don’t really get solicitors because of the gates and so to find somebody to come in and tell you that ‘this is my house, I inherited and I’m moving in,... yeah it is traumatizing,” the wife said. “We are very thankful that we weren’t harmed physically in any way, but it was very unsettling.”

Avoid Key Financial Scams



By NWACA BOARD

In 2022, Americans lost more than \$8.8 billion to scams of various sorts. Review of scam data by the FBI showed the three most common financial scams accounted for \$3.3 billion of that total. On October 26, Ricky Jones from Austin Police Department’s Office of Community Liaison will describe these scams and tell us how to recognize them and avoid them. In addition, he’ll discuss how you can sometimes get back some of the lost funds, if you report the scam quickly.

Join us to hear the presentation, ask questions, and pick up useful handouts.

Hosted by NWACA and St. Matthew’s
Thursday, October 26, 5:00 p.m.
St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church
Huffman Hall
4121 Steck Avenue (main parking lot)

Austin Firefighters Have New Contract in Place

By ELIZABETH PAGANO
Austin Monitor

After years of heated negotiations, and about a year without a contract in place, Austin firefighters finally have an agreement with the city in place.

The contract, which went into effect in early September, comes from an three-member arbitration panel. Unlike a normal contract process, it does not require further approval from the Austin Firefighters Association or City Council. In addition, neither the city nor the union can reject the contract, which will be in place until October 2025.

A press release from the city touts base wage increases of 4 percent for the three years of the contract, starting retroactively in Fiscal Year 2023 and a 6 percent lump sum payment. In addition, the new contract elimi-

nates random and post-accident drug testing, and exemptions from discipline for prescribed cannabis use. The contract also adds June-teenth as a paid holiday and shortens firefighters’ workweeks by one hour.

AFA President Bob Nicks told the Austin Monitor that the reduction in hours would give firefighters some real relief, but remains aspirational until the details are worked out. As far as pay goes, though, he said AFA members remain dissatisfied. “This is not the agreement that we had been promised, or the agreement the firefighters



need to stay whole. This stops the bleeding. For that, we appreciate it, but it’s not what was promised,” said Nicks, who explained that the rapid cost-of-living increases that have struck Austin have made the pay increases in the new contract look more reasonable than they are in reality.

Nicks classified the salary comparisons employed by the city that compared their jobs to low-skilled ones as “disrespectful.”

“It’s really taken morale, and made it much much worse,” said Nicks. “I wouldn’t be surprised if you see some actions come out of it in terms of censures or votes of no confidence in the future. It was very, very harsh on the firefighters.”

In response to the new labor contract, the city released a statement of its own.

“This arbitration has been a new and rather protracted process, but we are pleased with the arbitrator panel’s decision and award. We believe we have arrived at a good result for both the Austin Firefighters Association and the City,” said acting Assistant City Manager Bruce Mills in a statement to the press. “That said, and regardless of our belief that the arbitration panel delivered us a fair decision, going forward, our hope and continued goal is that we will be able to mutually achieve the next labor contract with the Firefighters Association through the collective bargaining process.”

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.



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DWI, Theft , Disturbance in Police and Sheriff’s Report

Recent Sheriff’s Office and Austin Police Department reports in the Northwest Austin area include a variety of cases.	08/28/2023 4:57 PM	CHIEF	00XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY THEFT	34XX NORTH HILLS AUTO THEFT	79XX SHOAL CREEK TERRORISTIC THREAT	09/11/2023 10:50 AM	57XX BALCONES THEFT	35XX GREYSTONE FAMILY DISTUR-BANCE	09/21/2023 8:45 AM
	83XX MESA DR	09/01/2023 3:24 PM	81XX MOPAC EXPY			36XX STECK AVE THEFT		73XX WOOD HOL-LOW	
	CRIMINAL MIS-CHIEF		DOC DISCHARGE	09/07/2023 12:59 PM					
	08/28/2023 7:21 PM		GUN	49XX BEVERLY HILLS		09/11/2023 12:55 PM	09/14/2023 4:53 PM	89XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY THEFT	09/21/2023 12:22 PM
	76XX WOOD HOL-LOW	09/02/2023 9:53 AM		THEFT OF BICYCLE		35XX NORTH HILLS AUTO THEFT	77XX WOOD HOL-LOW		50XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY
	08/24/2023 12:20 PM	89XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS			09/09/2023 10:11 AM				THEFT
	00XX VALBURN	THEFT OF SERVICE	09/07/2023 9:07 PM	CRIMINAL MIS-CHIEF	35XX NORTH HILLS CRIMINAL MIS-CHIEF	09/11/2023 7:09 PM	09/14/2023 6:03 PM	36XX NORTH HILLS FAMILY DISTUR-BANCE	09/21/2023 5:55 PM
	DEBIT CARD	81XX SONNET AVE	54XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY		09/10/2023 1:47 PM	35XX EXECUTIVE CENTER	72XX WOOD HOL-LOW		35XX NORTH HILLS
	ABUSE	DISTURBANCE	THEFT	THEFT	68XX WOOD HOL-LOW	HARASSMENT	FAMILY DISTUR-BANCE		AUTO THEFT
					AUTO THEFT				
08/26/2023 5:05 PM		09/02/2023 11:58 AM	09/08/2023 8:48 AM	09/09/2023 12:05 PM	09/10/2023 6:44 PM	09/11/2023 8:35 PM	09/14/2023 6:54 PM	09/17/2023 3:08 AM	09/22/2023 2:24 AM
35XX GREYSTONE		70XX LAKEWOOD	00XX MESA DR	36XX GREYSTONE	85XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY	80XX MESA DR	35XX STECK AVE	71XX WOOD HOL-LOW	33XX NORTHLAND
AGG ASSAULT W/	08/29/2023 12:01 AM	DWI .15 BAC OR	POSSESSION OF	CRIMINAL MIS-CHIEF	FAMILY DISTUR-BANCE	SHOPLIFTING	DWI 2ND	AGG ASLT STRAN-GLE	BURGLARY
MOTOR VEH	38XX MOUNT	ABOVE	MARIJUANA						
	BONNELL								
08/26/2023 6:44 PM		09/02/2023 5:12 PM	09/08/2023 12:42 PM	09/09/2023 1:03 PM	09/11/2023 12:30 AM	09/11/2023 9:43 PM	09/14/2023 7:01 PM	09/17/2023 9:20 AM	09/22/2023 11:21 AM
36XX GREYSTONE	08/29/2023 8:32 AM	35XX GREYSTONE	81XX MOPAC EXPY	42XX GNARL DR	40XX SIDEHILL	77XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY	71XX HART LN	76XX WOOD HOL-LOW	73XX WOOD HOL-LOW
THEFT OF AUTO		AUTO THEFT	FAMILY DISTUR-BANCE	HARASSMENT		FAMILY DISTUR-BANCE	THEFT		THEFT
PARTS	CRIMINAL MIS-CHIEF	09/03/2023 12:09 AM		09/09/2023 2:03 PM					
		42XX MOUNT		36XX STECK AVE					
08/27/2023 8:55 AM		BONNELL		THEFT					
60XX MOUNT	08/29/2023 9:49 AM	THEFT	09/08/2023 8:33 PM						
BONNELL	37XX EXECUTIVE		38XX MOUNT						
BURGLARY	CENTER		BONNELL						
	HARASSMENT	09/04/2023 1:44 PM	THEFT						
		95XX JOLLYVILLE							
08/27/2023 9:58 AM		THEFT							
36XX EXECUTIVE	08/29/2023 4:48 PM		09/08/2023 9:27 PM						
CENTER	70XX VILLAGE	09/04/2023 1:51 PM	59XX COURTYARD						
AUTO THEFT	CENTER	35XX FAR WEST	THEFT						
	CRED CARD ABUSE	BLVD							
08/27/2023 10:19 AM		FORGERY & PASS-ING	09/08/2023 10:10 PM						
35XX GREYSTONE	08/29/2023 7:23 PM		65XX EAST HILL						
AUTO THEFT	36XX GREYSTONE	09/04/2023 8:44 PM	HARASSMENT						
		38XX MOUNT							
08/27/2023 11:41 AM		BONNELL	09/08/2023 11:38 PM						
36XX GREYSTONE	08/30/2023 4:30 PM	THEFT	84XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY						
AUTO THEFT	AUTO THEFT		DWI						
		09/04/2023 11:00 PM							
08/27/2023 4:09 PM		52XX OLD SPICE-WOOD SPRINGS	09/09/2023 7:10 AM						
36XX GREYSTONE	08/30/2023 5:30 PM		36XX STECK AVE						
AUTO THEFT	75XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY	AGG ASS STRAN-GLE	THEFT						
08/27/2023 11:06 PM		09/06/2023 3:48 PM	09/09/2023 7:26 AM						
33XX NORTHLAND	08/30/2023 6:31 PM		73XX WOOD HOL-LOW						
ASSAULT	89XX ROCKCREST	45XX AUTUMN	AUTO THEFT						
	FAMILY DISTUR-BANCE	LEAF							
		FORGERY & PASS-ING							
08/28/2023 3:12 PM			09/09/2023 8:29 AM						
55XX BALCONES	08/31/2023 9:24 PM		36XX STECK AVE						
SHOPLIFTING	85XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY		THEFT						
	CRIMINAL MIS-	09/07/2023 6:33 AM	09/09/2023 8:49 AM						

APD Search for 3 Women in Connection to a Burglary

A vehicle burglary incident occurred in the Bull Creek Preserve on Sunday, September 17, 2023, at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Video shows three women exiting a SUV, breaking the window of a pickup truck before stealing several items from it.

Austin Police Department detectives are investigating and searching for the three individuals.

Austin Police Chief’s Monthly Report for August, 2023									
City-Wide					Baker Sector				
Crimes Against Persons					Crimes Against Persons				
	Aug 2023	Aug 2022	% Change	All 2023		Aug 2023	Aug 2022	% Change	All 2023
Murder	3	9	-67%	38	Murder	0	0	-100%	1
Aggravated Assault	318	304	5%	2,416	Aggravated Assault	21	11	-91%	118
Simple Assault	762	855	-11%	6,306	Simple Assault	48	86	-44%	487
Crimes Against Property					Crimes Against Property				
	Aug 2023	Aug 2022	% Change	All 2023		Aug 2023	Aug 2022	% Change	All 2023
Robbery	79	67	18%	619	Robbery	5	5	0%	42
Burglary	332	386	-14%	2,960	Burglary	35	46	-24%	302
Burglary of Vehicle	643	831	-23%	6,174	Burglary of Vehicle	96	165	-42%	1,166
Auto Theft	684	449	44%	4,461	Auto Theft	49	57	-42%	335
Vandalism	552	508	-9%	4,218	Vandalism	64	49	31%	450
Crimes Against Society					Crimes Against Society				
	Aug 2023	Aug 2022	% Change	All 2023		Aug 2023	Aug 2022	% Change	All 2023
Drug Violations	225	293	-23%	2,367	Drugs	15	16	-6%	101
Weapons	70	79	-11%	718	Weapons	2	2	0	21

Madison
Pharis compiled this report mostly from SpotCrime at www.spotcrime.com and also from CrimeRe-ports.

APD may be required to release detailed data monthly

By CHAD SWIATECKI
Austin Monitor

Austin Police Department may soon be required to regularly publish comprehensive data on the city's digital portal in a move to add transparency and address a backlog of thousands of public information requests.

City Council is set to consider a resolution from Council Member Chito Vela that directs city staff to develop a plan for the release of three years' worth of APD data. That release would be followed by monthly publication of the latest data involving calls for service, calls requiring mental health resources, person-



nel categories involved and hours worked in different assignments, overtime usage by activity category, retirements and other separations, warrants issued, response times and searches conducted.

If it passes, the city manager will have to submit a timeline and budget for the data management and publication to City Council by December.

Vela's proposal comes weeks after the publication of a city audit that found APD recently had a backlog of 20,000 public information requests that have gone unfulfilled, with many taking a year or more to receive a response.

"Someone in the police department told me we've been two years away from a good data portal for 20 years, and I think it's true," Vela told the Austin Monitor.

"The police department wants it, the public wants it, the council wants it, but for various technical and administrative reasons, it

has not happened. The police department wants it because they are drowning in public information requests that are difficult and time-consuming for them to fulfill."

"We want a data-informed public safety policy, and don't want to be governing by anecdote and reacting to the latest kind of spectacular crime or whatever the case may be. We want a more robust, data-driven policy, and I think the public wants it too," Vela shared.

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.

Austin Police Department Hosts Community Input Sessions

The Austin Police Department is facilitating a second round of community input sessions in the strategic planning process. The strategic plan is a roadmap that will guide its department's priorities, policy-making and actions for the next five years.

"I look forward to all the feedback we will receive as we continue having this open conversa-

tion about APD's Strategic Plan. Hearing from our community, as they share their insights, is key to helping us craft a strategic plan for your police department that is built on collaboration and trust," shared Interim Chief of Police Robin Henderson.

In June, APD collected primary information during its first round of community input ses-

sions. In this second round, APD would like to present its top five strategic priorities in an open-house format.

The top five priorities include: develop workforce, enhance organizational capacity, foster leadership excellence, engage the community and protect Austin.

The two remaining open houses from 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. are on Oct. 5 at upRising Church at 8601 S 1st St. and Oct. 10 at Gethsemane Lutheran Church at 200 W Anderson Ln. For more information: PublicInput.Com/APDStrategicPlan2023.

Austin Slowly Expands Police Oversight Powers Voters Passed in the Spring

By LUZ MORENO-LOZANO
KUT

Months after Austinites overwhelmingly passed a sweeping measure calling for stronger police oversight, the City Council voted on September 21 to set hard deadlines for staff to expand the Office of Police Oversight's power.

The resolution was approved 10 to 1, with Council Member Mackenzie Kelly voting against.

Proposition A, which was backed by the criminal justice nonprofit Equity Action, gives investigators with the civilian-led office greater access to police records, including body camera footage, and expands its role in fielding complaints and in disciplinary decision-making.

Opponents, who ran an unsuccessful campaign against the measure, say it violates state law. It's also been slammed by the police union, which has been locked in a stalemate with the city over a labor contract for the better part of a year.

"The APA simply will not stand by while this city and anti-police activists operate with blatant disregard for state law and the rights and protections afforded to our hardworking men and women," the union said in May.

Council Member Zo Qadri, who authored the resolution, said some of Prop A can be implemented without the union's support.

"It's important to have the trust and respect the will of the voters," he said before the vote on September 21. "The fact that we are now in September and it hasn't been fully implemented is a disservice. It's the right thing to do. I think we deserve a police department that is accountable and transparent."

SO, WHAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

The city can implement several changes to its policies without approval from the police union.

Right now, an investigation can move forward only when a person identifies themselves and swears under oath. But Prop A requires that police oversight investigators accept and review all complaints against police and determine if a full investigation is necessary.

Qadri's resolution also called for the office to have direct and unrestricted access to information to review complaints and use-of-force incidents.

Chris Harris with Equity Action said the city was denying the civilian investigators access to information because they did not have a certain level of security awareness training and certification in the use of a federal database.

Qadri said the resolution requires staff from the Office of Police Oversight to be enrolled no later than Oct. 1 in the next available security certi-

fication course. Upon completion of that course, the city will immediately grant them unrestricted access to records.

It is unclear, however, whether the federal government will grant them access to the database because they are civilian non-sworn officers.

Harris applauded the city for moving forward, but expressed frustration with the slow rollout. He was not alone. Daniela Silva, a resident who spoke during public comments on September 21, said the city owes it to the voters to ensure the police department is subject to strong oversight and is transparent with the community.

"Frankly, I'm frustrated that we even have to be here," she said. "I would expect the state legislature not to represent me or make decisions in my best interest because that is kind of the status quo at this point, but I always thought that at least Austin would have my best interest in mind."

STATE LAW RESTRICTIONS

Some parts of the ordinance that relate to police records — mainly access to an officer's personnel files — may be prohibited by state rules and are unlikely to be agreed upon by the police union.

Qadri assured residents on September 21 that the city's implementation of policies related to training, investigations and reporting by the Office

of Police Oversight were legal. Additionally, a new opinion from the Attorney General's Office that came out late on September 21 could allow the city to implement more aspects of Prop A.

"There is some need for clarity and we will obtain that clarity, and soon," Mayor Kirk Watson said. "I believe the council will bring back another resolution once we have clarity on that [attorney general] opinion that allows the city to do more than was anticipated when we started today (September 21). ... We hope to be and want to be in compliance with Prop A as much as possible."

From April 1 to August 31, the Office of Police Oversight received 275 complaints about the Austin Police Department. Fifty-six were recommended for a full investigation, 46 were of concern to the community but did not violate policy, and 86 rose to the level of notifying a supervisor, who would then call the complainant. The remaining complaints are either pending, about other law enforcement agencies or departments that are not applicable to the oversight office, or awaiting response from the complainant.

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.

Council to consider joint hearing with Planning Commission on code amendments

By JO CLIFTON
Austin Monitor

Mayor Kirk Watson wants everyone in Austin to know that City Council will be holding a hearing on changes to the Land Development Code. Specifically, Council will be considering comments on proposals to allow three units per lot in single-family residential districts, allowing tiny homes and RVs to serve as accessory dwelling units and eliminating the dwelling unit occupancy limit for residential uses.

“We want to make sure that we have the credibility as we go forward with these – with significant, robust, complete, total notice – whatever’s the right word,” said Watson at the September 19 Council work session.

The Planning Commission and Council will each hold public hearings on the three proposed changes to the code. In addition, prior to either of those hearings, Council and the Planning Commission will meet in a joint session for a public hearing on the three proposals. The city has not held joint hearings in the past, but state law provides for such hearings.

Assistant City Attorney Patricia Link told Council that the Law Department would be recommending “at a minimum, 10 days’ notice for publishing in the Austin-American Statesman, giving notice to the Community

Registry (and) giving notice to every parcel within the city’s zoning jurisdiction.”

Council Member Leslie Pool, who sponsored a resolution to move forward with the code amendment allowing tiny homes and RVs as ADUs, wrote on the City Council Message Board: “This week, item 55 presents an opportunity for a unique approach to public notice and public input for several LDC amendments coming this fall.

“One of my main concerns about past efforts to update the LDC is how residents would be notified about big changes, and how they would be heard about those changes. I wholeheartedly support a citywide, individual notification, and have publicly supported that approach for many years from the dais, in the media, and at LDC town halls and neighborhood gatherings. It just makes sense. It also makes sense to give folks more public input opportunities, which the joint meeting does, before PC considers their recommendations and council finally deliberates.

“Under state law, council may set a joint public hearing with the Planning Commission when considering LDC amendments and may adopt methods of notification for the hearing and subsequent council and commission meetings to deliberate on those amendments.” She concluded, “Citywide notification may be expensive, but it’s the right

thing to do in the case of the amendments that are coming this fall.”

Council Member Mackenzie Kelly had just one question for staff, and that was how much the notification process costs. That information was not immediately available but Link promised it would be provided. Council Member Alison Alter was concerned because Council did not have the part of the ordinance describing notice requirements, called Exhibit A. Later in the day, staff posted a revised version of the ordinance with Exhibit A attached.

As described by Link, Exhibit A directs the city manager to publish a notice about the meetings in the Austin American-Statesman at least 10 days before the joint public hearing. The amendment also directs the manager to notify the Community Registry and to mail a notice about the hearings to property owners and utility account holders for each parcel within the city’s full-purpose and limited-purpose jurisdictions at least 10 days before the joint public hearing.

According to the amendment, each notice should contain a brief description of the proposed amendments and provide information on a website that will allow members of the public to learn more about the amendments and protest requirements and provide feedback on the proposed code changes.

The city manager is also directed to notify people about the joint public hearing, the Planning Commission meeting and the City Council meeting on various social media sites, starting with the city’s website. Link said if Council approves the joint hearing proposal, a member of the Law Department would sit down with a representative from the Office of the City Clerk and staff for the Planning Commission to find dates for the joint public hearing and subsequent Planning Commission and Council meetings.

Whatever Council decides to do about these proposed land code amendments, they should not face the same problem that they did with four changes they adopted earlier this year. The same plaintiffs who derailed the rewrite of the Land Development Code are going back to court next week to argue that the city did not provide sufficient notice before enacting Affordability Unlocked, changes to the vertical mixed-use regulations, allowing residential uses in commercial zones and the compatibility ordinance. But Community Not Commodity, the group that has supported lawsuits over changes to the code in the past, is already stirring up opposition to the proposed amendments.

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.

Proposed Zoning Changes Bring New Opportunities and Challenges for Austin Homeowners

By ALEX REED, ROBERT BREUNIG, JR.
Breunig & Mazcuri PLLC

On July 20, 2023, the Austin City Council passed a resolution intended to address high housing costs and reduced home ownership rates by allowing greater density. This resolution noted that the current Land Development Code (LDC) is not conducive to smaller scaled homes. The City directed the City Manager, Jesús Garza, to propose amendments to the LDC to achieve the following goals: (a) reduce the minimum lot size in single-family zoning districts from 5,750 square feet to 2,500 square feet (or less) so that existing standard-sized lots can be subdivided to pave the way for a variety of new housing types such as row houses, townhomes, tri- and four-plexes, garden homes, and cottage courts, etc., (b) amend the maximum

number of housing units to allow at least three units per lot in single-family zoning districts without requiring existing structures to be preserved, and (c) create a new use for three-family residential that allows for flexible housing configurations in existing single family zoning districts. Any amendments proposed by the City Manager are to be presented before the November 23, 2023 meeting of the City’s Housing and Planning Committee (a subset of City Council). The City Council proposed to vote on the amendments beginning December 14, 2023.

Homeowners have voiced concern at how such amendments to the LDC will affect their properties and how such changes in zoning might interact with existing deed restrictions.

While zoning districts are ordinances en-

acted by the City, deed restrictions are private contracts between the owners of properties subject to such restrictions. Deed restrictions are recorded in the county records and commonly noted on the title report issued in connection with a typical home purchase. By purchasing a property, the buyer is deemed to have agreed to abide by such restrictions. Deed restrictions are separate from zoning rules and continue to be enforceable if a zoning district changes. The City does not enforce deed restrictions between private owners. Rather, enforcement is left to the property owner (and/or an established HOA) against the violating property owner via private suit.

For example, many deed restrictions in the NWACA area permit only a single dwelling per lot and have minimum square footage in-

terior floor area requirements. In the event applicable zoning districts change to allow more than one dwelling unit per lot, deed restrictions in this example would still control with respect to the single dwelling per lot requirement. If the deed restrictions do not provide for a minimum lot size or “no further subdivision” obligation, the possibility arises of a lot being subdivided into smaller lots which could result in higher density of dwellings in an area where there used to be one. The single dwelling and minimum floor area requirements per lot would still be in effect with respect to such smaller lots.

Thus, the proposed zoning changes will impact owners in different ways depending on their particular restrictions. We look forward to seeing drafts of the proposed changes to the LDC for the specifics.

Austin Transit Partnership Seeks Federal Grant Funding for Light Rail

By CHAD SWIATECKI
Austin Monitor

Leaders of the Austin Transit Partnership are expected today to give the OK to petition the federal government for transportation grants needed to cover half the cost of the planned light rail system through downtown Austin. That step, which will come during the ATP Board of Directors meeting, will be the most significant public move on the light rail project since the downtown route was announced this spring.

ATP staffers said they've been working quietly in the intervening months to get the agency approved as a potential recipient of Federal Transit Administration dollars, which would come from the competitive Capital Investment Grants program. The agency has also worked on very preliminary design concepts for the various components of the light rail line while also preparing for extensive environmental planning required by the federal government's National Environmental Policy Act.

Jen Pyne, ATP's executive vice president of planning and community, said agency staff will spend the next year-plus focused on those three objectives: approval as a grant recipient, applying for FTA money and pushing ahead with environmental work.

"ATP is relatively new for this kind of thing, a couple years old, and so there's some process associated with affirming our eligibility to receive and use those federal funds," Pyne told the Austin Monitor. "It's about is making sure that we're federally compliant in terms of our procurement policies, our civil rights programs, et cetera. So we're sharing a lot of that material with FTA towards demonstrating that compliance."

While voters approved the local financial contribution for the rail system in 2020, the system is still in the middle of a development and planning phase that will run till 2026. The next significant steps for ATP include filing an official notice of intent related to NEPA early next year, followed soon after by an updated base design for the system. A draft environmental impact statement will be available to the public next fall, with a final document scheduled for completion in fall 2025.

The FTA grant application process will also begin early next year and is expected to run through early 2026.

Greg Canally, ATP's executive director, said the agency will continue its community engagement work this fall, looking to the public for feedback on design concepts and more detail about how the system can best meet their needs.

"We are always going to be out there in the community ... going to talk to the folks along the alignment, but also stakeholders about their user experience. We now have the plan, but what's it going to feel like to ride the system? What are the stations going to look like? What are the principles that we want to solve for? The next two or three months we will go actively engage in that Austin community and start hearing feedback about some of these more particulars now that they know



where we're building it."

On the competitive CIG grant program, Pyne said ATP has talked extensively with transit planners in major cities such as Seattle, San Diego and Dallas to learn about their experiences seeking federal funding. With New York City as the only other major transit system seeking FTA money, ATP leaders are hopeful the federal contribution will reach the expected 50 percent of the total project cost.

"(CIG) is the gold standard for these kinds of capital, high-capacity transit programs. It's a lot of work and you have to work through some federal process, but at the end of the day it's a grant that reimburses our costs and it's not paid back. ... It's hard to get that level of federal participation from other grant programs," she said. "We've also engaged a lot with industry that would be probably bidding for the contracts that we will have eventually, and learned a lot there about lessons learned, best practices in implementing projects across the country."

The recent unveiling of the light rail route included messaging from ATP that it would look for ways to further extend the northern and eastern lines, especially to reach Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. Canally said the current endpoints at 38th Street and Yellow Jacket Lane will be the focus of the CIG application process, while pursuing other funding for the potential extensions.

"We're going to move that through NEPA and through the CIG process and make sure that we are all on hand to get that done. We will be ready, especially from an engineering perspective, if in case some funding is identified, to do that in advance of us drawing down those federal funds," he said.

Pyne said FTA's Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program that provides credit assistance for qualified projects is one possible source of additional funding that ATP will

consider.

On the environmental front, Deron Lozano, ATP's senior vice president for environment and project development, said NEPA requires detailed data on land use, population, employment impacts and many other factors in proximity to the system. Currently, Lozano and his team are working to determine what permits, planning and other documents will be needed, including a Mitigation Monitoring Plan that tries to account for as many uncertainties as possible. One example Lozano offered was a recent Arizona transit system route where an unknown historical site was discovered.

"We're looking at what are potential permits that we'll need to secure, and what are those permits that are needed for the unknown? So that's something that we're working through kind of hand in hand with the city as partners to help alleviate some of those unknowns as they potentially come up," he said. "The Mitigation Monitoring Plan defines all those actions and items that you have to go through to make sure you meet local and federal requirements. We'll also be working through local guidance and local regulations. The tree ordinance in Austin is certainly different than tree ordinances in other parts of the country. So the NEPA document will assess and evaluate any type of tree impacts based on the local requirements."

Canally said the agency's close relationship with the city – including having needed city staff working inside ATP offices – is expected to streamline the process for needed work on utilities and other city infrastructure.

"Ultimately, we're building trains in the cities right away and that utility work associated with things like trees, bike lanes and other work has us highly engaged," he said. "The city has a dedicated team of folks working embedded with us here in the office, which is really a best practice, and we've already had questions from around the country saying, 'How do you guys get that done already?'"

"We know doing all this thoughtful planning work now will make construction not easier, but at least thought out and planned out."

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.

October 2023 Road Construction Report

By RUVEN BROOKS

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority 183 North Mobility project will add two new tolled express lanes in each direction and an additional general purpose lane in each direction along 183 between SH45 North and Mopac (Loop 1). Construction is underway with targeted completion in 2026. Details of individual closures and detours can be found here: www.183north.com/

The City of Austin 2016 Mobility Bond is providing funding for widening Spicewood Springs Road from Loop 360 to Mesa Drive as a Regional Mobility Project. Awarding of a contract for construction was scheduled to take place in September 2023 with construction to be completed in 2026.

The Texas Department of Transportation is planning five major projects along Loop 360; they primarily replace stop lights with overpasses. The first of these, the Westlake Drive/Cedar Street proj-

ect broke ground for construction on June 1 of this year. The project is forecast to be completed in mid-2025. Meanwhile, expect construction delays on this section of Loop 360.

The TxDOT project to build an overpass on Loop 360 at Spicewood Spring Road could start as early as 2028, but no exact date has been set yet. Until this project is complete, the City of Austin project to widen Spicewood Springs Road will not relieve congestion since traffic will still be held up at the traffic light onto Loop 360.



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Spotlight: Que Divino Cocina

By JANICE GREEN

Welcome to our newest neighborhood eatery in Northwest Austin – Que Divino Cocina on Greystone near Mopac in the former site of Austin Terrier. (Dog owners, relax. Que Divino continues the site's tradition of welcoming canine companions on their deck and outdoor eating space.)

Cousins Leo Mendoza and Isaias Canales, proprietors of Que Divino Cocina (“that divine cuisine”), join the many family-owned nationality-focused eating establishments in our neighborhood. They bring to their table a long family history of food preparation and food service experience that features both authentic Mexican dishes and Tex-Mex foods for dine-in and catering options. I wondered, what sets these two cuisines apart? Leo educated me with this tidbit: Tex-Mex characteristics include more cheese, sour cream, guacamole, and the presence of ground beef.

At Que Divino Cocina everything is made by hand for their kid's menu, family-style menu, breakfast menu, catering, and lunch/dinner menus. Their taco bar features in-house-made tacos: carne asada (beef), seasoned chicken, birria (a shredded beef brisket with a broth dip), pastor (marinated pork), and vegetarian. Tex-Mex plates cover the standard enchiladas (beef, chicken, cheese) and crispy corn tacos.



The platters (for 2) include fish or fajita, and their Texas Botana platter takes nachos for the family to a whole new level. Consider giving a shot at eating a Big Mama or Big Daddy Mexican Burrito. A full bar is available for drink selections.

In addition to the eat-in or online-order options, Que Divino Cocina provides an experienced and successful catering service which began years ago in Hutto. Their specialty includes the taco bar and other dishes cooked and served in colorful Mexican pots. Que Divino provides breakfast and other in-house meals and foods for corporate meetings (and incentives for employees returning to their offices), private events, neighborhood gatherings, celebrations of and for the young and older.

Que Divino Cocina has demonstrated a history of giving back to their communities with a focus on helping local schools. Their hospitality and social conscience are also reflected in providing meals to the homeless and low-income individuals with disabling conditions through Austin's Endeavor social programs.

During the summer the sweltering heat dampened our appetites and discouraged many of us from eating out and enjoying the experience. But cooler temps are on their way, so it's a great time to try the new restaurant in our neighborhood. Que Divino Cocina should definitely be on your foodie list!

Contact Info: 512-520-8005; 3435 Greystone Drive #112; go to quedivinosocina.com for hours (open at 7 a.m. 6 days of the week) and online ordering.

Gourmand's Corner Restaurants to Look Forward to

By CHRIS HAJDU

Road will become the fifth location of the Austin-based chain, The Grove Wine Bar and Kitchen. With the other four restaurants (Westlake, Lakeway, downtown and Cedar Park), The Grove has become a staple of the Austin culinary scene. Now, The Grove will gain a nice foothold in the Northwest side of the city and the site is perfect as it includes a spacious deck with views of the many area trees.

It's expected that the menu will be reflective of their offerings from other locations with an emphasis on fresh bruschetta, salads, soups, small plates, sandwiches, entrees and pizzas. The Grove will offer an extensive wine list and wine flights that allow customers to sample wines within a specific style. The restaurant is expected to open in 2024.

www.grovwinebar.com



Grove restaurant sign

west Hills home for Austin-based Kesos Tacos. Kesos will be taking over the former Taco Shack location at 3901 Spicewood Springs Road and should be opening in early 2024. We were sad to see Taco Shack leave our neighborhood (it is moving east to 1508 W. Anderson Lane) but it's good to see another local taco spot poised to move in.

Kesos has been open for 10 years and currently has a West Campus location on Martin Luther King Boulevard. Kesos serves homemade salsas, burritos, breakfast tacos, nachos, and churro bites. They are known for topping all their tacos with queso. Margaritas and several tap and canned/bottled beer offerings round out the menu. A weekly happy hour is offered at the Martin Luther King site. We will follow up with more specific information and operating hours as opening day approaches.

www.kesostacos.com
3901 Spicewood Springs Road



Bouldin Acres

You may want to check out a new restaurant that opened in August 2023 – it's the north location of the popular south side restaurant and bar, Bouldin Acres. The original Bouldin Acres opened on South Lamar in early 2020 and has been popular with folks south of the river. Located at 1806 Braker Ln., you'll find pickleball courts (reservable online), a full-service bar, a dog-friendly patio, a children's playground and lawn games. For sports fans, there are 25 TV monitors, and since they are only one mile from Q2 Stadium, the venue is an official home base for Austin FC fans. Bouldin Acres is also work-friendly with free WiFi and access to lots of electric plugs.

The new restaurant's kitchen is operated by CM Smokehouse and the menu is more extensive than the south location's bill of fare. In addition to traditional items like burgers and pulled pork or chopped beef sandwiches, they offer nontraditional items including a brisket crunchwrap, smoked-and-fried baby back rib wings, and pork crispito tacos.

www.bouldinacres.com and www.cmsmokehouse.com
Pickleball Reservations: www.bouldinacres.com/pickleball/
1806 W Braker Ln
Hours: Open Daily: 11 a.m. – Midnight, 21+ after 10 p.m.
Happy Hour: M-Th 3-5 p.m. - \$2 off all appetizers, burgers, drinks



Kesos Tacos



SOLD

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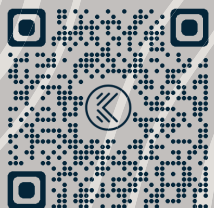
7915 MESA TRAILS CIR, 78731 | \$875,000



SOLD

7811 RIDGELINE DR N, 78731 | \$575,000

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August 2023

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A low figure signals a Seller's market with limited available properties and potential price increases. Conversely, a high number indicates a Buyer's market with an excess of available properties and potential price decreases. 6 months is considered 'balanced'. Real estate professionals and analysts use this metric to assess market conditions and make informed decisions about pricing, marketing, and investments. For more information about the health of the market, contact Joe and Cara. **These stats are for MLS Area 1A only*.*



51

total single family
homes available







135

total single family
homes sold YTD



Condos and Townhomes

	NUMBER OF SALES	AVG SALE PRICE
 MAY 2023	11	\$443,636
 JUN 2023	14	\$450,691
 JUL 2023	12	\$376,225
 AUG 2023	15	\$452,680



Phil Swann Photography

Q&A Shalanda Byers Anderson Volleyball Head Coach

1) What do you expect to see in the district this season?

We will be fighting hard to make the cut to get into the playoffs. WE have one of the hardest districts in central Texas volleyball.

2) What district team is the biggest rival this year?

There truly isn't a rival being just the competition in our district is so competitive.

3) Where are your program strengths and what areas need most improvement?

Our strengths this year are our team playing as a team and

keeping good team chemistry. We need improvement in our first ball contact.

4) Do you have an interesting story to share about the team that most would not know about? (this part was missing from the copy?)

5) How many years have you been coaching at AHS and what is your coaching record overall and at AHS?

This is my 13th year of coaching here at Anderson. 240 wins 210 losses

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Varsity Girls Volleyball Roster

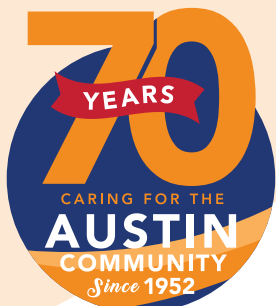
Ava Pandya
Madeline Stuesser
Jazmine Gaston
Parker Duncan
Ashlynn Axtell
Norah Crosier
Claire Nix

Aubrey Mitchell
Marlee Whitford
Liv Mitchell
Josie Ostryniec
Izzy Orozco
Lilly Hutchison

Varsity Girls Volleyball Schedule

Aug 4 @ Leander
Aug. 7 @ Stony Point
Aug. 15 @ San Marcos
Aug. 16 @ Sinton
Aug. 22 @ Cedar Park
Aug. 24 @ San Marcos
Sep. 1 @ Dripping Springs
Sep. 5 @ Westlake
Sep. 8 vs Austin High
Sep. 12 vs Lake Travis
Sep. 19 @ Del Valle

Sep. 22 vs Hays Johnson
Sep. 26 vs McCallum
Sep. 29 @ Aloms
Oct. 3 vs Dripping Springs
Oct. 6 vs Westlake
Oct. 10 @ Austin
Oct. 13 @ Lake Travis
Oct. 17 vs Bowie
Oct. 20 vs Del Valle
Oct. 24 @ Hays Johnson



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Austin

I want to spotlight an organization that is near and dear to my heart. We are **[Re]building Together Austin**. Our mission is to [re]pair homes, [re]vitalize communities and [re]build lives. Rebuilding Together Austin is proud to be a partner in the solution to providing safe homes and communities. Thank you to all of our [Re]Builders for your generous support and we look forward to a healthy, impactful year ahead!

This year we celebrate our 10 year anniversary of serving Austin Area homeowners. Contact me if you'd like to become a home **SPONSOR**.

-Albert Allen - Board President, Rebuilding Together Austin

www.rebuildingtogetheraustin.org

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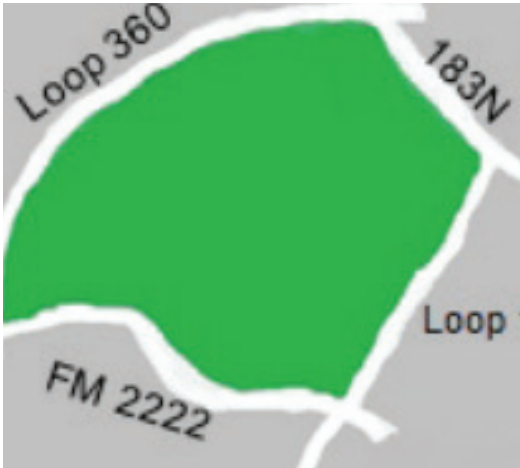
Key Contacts

Austin Citywide Information Center	512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Police	911
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues)	311
APD District Representative Officer, Phillip Sparkman	phillip.sparkman@austintexas.gov
District 10 Councilmember, Alison Alter	512-974-2110
To get the District 10 monthly newsletter	district10@austintexas.gov
Northwest Austin News Publisher	512-483-1708
\	Lynette@FourPointsNews.com
Northwest Austin News Co-Editors	Joyce Statz and Julie Rawlings

New to the Neighborhood?

If this is your first copy of our newsletter, welcome to the NWACA neighborhood! The map shows our boundaries – Mopac, RM 2222, Loop 360, and US Highway 183 (Research Boulevard). There are about 13,500 households who are your neighbors and are happy you're here!

This newsletter is one way to know what's happening in NWACA, but there's much more. Check out the quick link For New Neighbors on the home page at www.nwaca.org. Use the Membership button on the home page or use the form in this newsletter to become a NWACA member. Members have access to the weekly email NWACA Notes and the ability to join the NWACA closed Facebook group, to keep in touch with each other and with the latest news about NWACA.



2022 – 2024 NWACA Board of Directors

Joyce Statz, President		
Julie Rawlings, Vice President		
Mick Koffend, Treasurer		
Julie Waidelich and Bridget Keating, Co-Secretaries		
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• Ruven Brooks	• Richard Grayum	• Teri Schock
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• Carol Dochen	• Mae Levitan	
• Jessica Forrest	• Ben Luckens	

Each of the Board Members can be reached at info@nwaca.org or by phone at 737-235-7325

The NWACA Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month except July and December. Please visit our calendar at www.nwaca.org to see the specific time and location. If you wish to speak at a Board meeting, please send email a week before the meeting to info@nwaca.org, so that we can put you on the agenda.

NWACA is bordered on the north by U.S. Highway 183 (Research Boulevard), on the west by Loop 360, on the south by RM 2222, and on the east by Mopac (Loop 1).

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name:	Phone: ()
Address:	Zip:
Email (confidential):	



Annual dues \$25

Optional Contributions:

Fourth of July Parade	\$10	\$20	Other
Constable	\$10	\$20	Other
Parks Fund	\$10	\$20	Other

To join:

go to www.nwaca.org and pay online via credit card
or send this form and payment to:
NWACA P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755

Volunteer!

Please check a committee on which you would like to participate:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime & Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree, Environment, and Wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire Prevention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning and Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks | |



Members, please request to join our **Facebook Group** and sign up for **NWACA Notes**, our weekly email.



For more info email us at: info@nwaca.org

Special Thanks to Members

NWACA Membership Committee

NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to the 4th of July Parade Fund, the Park Fund, and the Constable Fund, between July 18 and September 21, 2023.

Donations to the 4th of July Parade Fund help NWACA to host the best 4th of July parade in Austin! The Park Fund helps us do events in our parks and revitalize parks in the NWACA area. The Constable Fund helps us provide the patrol activities of the Travis County Constable.

- LaNell Coltharp
- David and Sheila Page
- (and, apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)



ARE YOU A NWACA MEMBER?

Receiving the newsletter does not guarantee membership.
Not sure? Visit nwaca.org to confirm!

Here are 5 great reasons to join today!

GREAT NEIGHBORS = GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD

Together, we can continue to do great things for our neighborhood!

STAY INFORMED ABOUT ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU

We are actively involved in our community and advocate for our residents.

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

We encourage friendships among residents through our events - July 4th parade, National Night Out, Recycling Collection, Garage Sales, and more!

PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY

Learn about fire safety, crime prevention, oak wilt, environmental concerns, park development, wildlife management, zoning/planning, and more!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

We are deeply invested in building strong relationships within our business network to positively impact our neighborhood.

Together we can make a difference!
JOIN TODAY @ NWACA.ORG/MEMBERS

Mark Your Calendars

These events are as planned as of September 20. As you consider participating in one of the events listed, please check first with the organizer. Items in italics are provided as a service; they are not NWACA events.

September 20 - October 1

Blue Lapis Light, site-specific aerial dance, Belonging II Universe
5000 Plaza on the Lake
www.bluelapislight.org/belonging-ii-universe

October 7, 8 AM to Noon

NWACA area Neighborhood Garage Sales
(hosted by individual NWACA members)

October 14, 8 AM to noon

Vegetation cleanup at Murchison Pool Park
If you can help, email info@nwaca.org

October 16, 8 PM

Judging of the Halloween Yard Decorating Contest

October 17, 7pm

Parks Committee – virtual

October 21, 9 AM to noon

Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park – sign up at
<https://www.givepulse.com/event/336685>

October 21, 1 PM to 3 PM

Electronics Recycling Event – for NWACA Members Only
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Parking Lot, 8134 Mesa Drive

October 24, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees – virtual

October 25, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting – 5280 Burger

October 26, 5:00 PM

Presentation on Avoiding Financial Scams
Huffman Hall, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
4121 Steck Avenue (main parking lot)

November 4, 9 AM to Noon

It's My Park Day – Cleanup at Steck Valley Greenbelt
See www.nwaca.org for signup information

November 21, 7pm

Parks Committee – virtual

November 28, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees – virtual

November 29, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting – 5280 Burger

Electronics, Styrofoam, Bathroom Supplies Collection Event October 21

By JOANIE ARROTT

Gather your outdated computer monitors, old micro-waves, iPhone3s, and blown-out stereo equipment and bring them to the NWACA Electronics Collection event in the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Mesa Drive parking lot on Saturday, October 21st from 1 to 3 p.m. This event is open to NWACA members only. If you're not a member, you can join at the event for the usual household membership fee of \$25.

Collected electronics, batteries, and Styrofoam will be taken to the City's Reuse and Recycle Drop-Off Center. Bathroom supplies will go to TerraCycle.

We will accept:

- Used electronics such as: computers and related supplies, printers, batteries, cameras, phones, LCD televisions, routers, stereo equipment, microwaves, and small refrigerators; all consumer electronic devices and appliances
- Clean Styrofoam blocks, egg cartons, cups, and con-

tainers

- Batteries of all sizes
- Used toothpaste tubes and floss containers
- Used disposable razors, replaceable-blade cartridge units, and razor plastic packaging

We will **not** accept:

- Rear-projection TVs or those with wooden frames
- Dirty Styrofoam food or drink containers
- Packing peanuts or plastic foam
- Household hazardous wastes including used oil, paint, light bulbs, or chemicals

We're always looking for volunteers for our collection events. We need folks to corral the cars, unload vehicles, load the collection truck, and assist with separating the collected materials. If you're looking for a great opportunity to help serve your neighborhood, meet your neighbors, and protect the environment, come join us! Any questions or volunteer sign-up can be sent to info@nwaca.org.

FALL INTO FALL, FROM 1

in the Mesa Drive parking lot at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church from 1 PM to 3 PM. Afternoon worked well for the shredding event; people have asked to make the change from morning to afternoon for other functions, too. This is for NWACA members; you can join or renew at the event if that's necessary. See the related article for details on what we will be gathering and what we cannot accept.

- Thursday, October 26 – Ricky Jones from the Austin Police Department Office of Community Liaison will discuss and entertain questions about financial scams and how to avoid them. This is a topic of interest to almost everyone, so please join us at 5 PM in Huffman Hall at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. There's more detail later in this newsletter.

We have three service opportunities for you in our local parks:

- October 14, 8 a.m. to noon – vegetation cleanup at Murchison Pool Park. If you can help, send email to info@nwaca.org
- October 21, 9 a.m. to noon – last of the monthly cleanups at Bull Creek District Park. Sign up at <https://www.givepulse.com/event/336685>
- November 4, 9 a.m. to noon – It's My Park Day event at Steck Valley Greenbelt. Signups will be open October 9. Watch www.nwaca.org for details

Halloween is near! We can't wait to see your creative outdoor decor. NWACA is conducting its first Halloween decorating contest, much like the December

holiday contest we've been doing for several years. When you see an especially impressive display, please email the address to info@nwaca.org. Nominate your favorite no later than October 15. Our contest judges will be out on the evening of October 16 to identify the scariest homes/yards.

You'll note that there's no October Old Quarry Library events list in this issue of the newsletter. Their HVAC failed several weeks ago, and it may be sometime in October before the library can reopen. We'll report on the reopening in our weekly NWACA Notes email and on Facebook, with hopes that it will be soon – they've been offering a wonderful slate of events recently.

Enjoy all the activities!

Prevent Oak Wilt

PLAN AHEAD - PRUNE

NOV thru JAN

- **Beetles Inactive**
- **Dormant Season**
- **Coldest Months**

Writer's Corner – Sunny Shen

By IDEE KWAK

Off the rooftop, over the sides, and across the grounds of 5000 Plaza on the Lake, Austin's renowned Blue Lapis Light presents *Belonging II Universe*, September 22-October 1. A featured soloist in the performance is our neighbor, Jun Shen (Sunny).

Sunny joined Blue Lapis Light (BLL) as a principal dancer and choreographer in June 2017; the following year Austin Critics Table awarded him Best Dancer for his part in *Belonging I*. Since then, he's performed in BLL's commissioned works as well as their yearly site-specific presentations from the IBC building to the Seaholm District Plaza. See www.bluelapislight.org/gallery for some photos.

Trained in Chinese classical opera, Chinese folk dance, and classical ballet, Sunny received his BA in dance from Beijing Capital Normal University and his MFA in dance from the University of Texas at Austin. Now in his seventh year teaching at Austin Community College, he has been a guest chore-



ographer, performer and teacher worldwide. His most recent contract was this April with the Regional Dance America Festival where he taught master classes to professional dancers.

In 2020 Sunny and his wife, Fan Nana Yang, founded Nana Ballet, www.nanaballetatx.com. Fan Nana's professional career began at age ten with performances in "Swan Lake" and "The Nutcracker". Over the years, subsequent appearances were coupled with her study of traditional ballet along with Chinese folk dance and Chinese classical dance. Like Sunny, she received her degree in dance from the Beijing Capital Normal University.

At their Nana studio in North Austin, the couple and their faculty offer group classes and private lessons from pre-school through adult, specializing in traditional ballet, Chinese traditional dance, contemporary dance, competitive team, and yoga. For those thinking about enrolling but not yet sure, they offer trial classes.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Sunny traveled back to China every year to visit his family. With a collector's sensibility, he brought back art, antiques and treasures of all sizes and kinds. With a recent decision to part with some of their vast and varied collection, Sunny and Fan Nana opened Socrates' Gallery, a fantastical shop near Nana Ballet.



Rounding out this lovely and very talented family are Sunny and Fan Nana's two daughters who both study dance and piano. The girls enjoy attending Hill Elementary, the school one of the many reasons the whole family loves living here in Northwest Austin.



MARKET UPDATE

YEAR TO DATE

NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS



\$1,150,000
MEDIAN SALES PRICE



\$165,641,508
SALES VOLUME



\$447
MEDIAN LIST PRICE/SF



\$435
MEDIAN SALE PRICE/SF



\$1,212,000
MEDIAN LIST PRICE



15
MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET



132
CLOSED SALES



SOURCE: ABOR MLS INCLUDING DATA FROM JAN 1 - SEPT 20, 2023 FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES, BASED ON NW
BOUNDARIES: MOPAC/HWY360/2222/HWY 183

JULIE WAIDELICH

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER

NORTHWEST HILLS RECENT SALES

8517 APPALACHIAN DR
Listed at \$1,060,000

3912 EDWARDS MOUNTAIN DR
Listed at \$1,150,000

6801 EDGEFIELD DR
Listed at \$1,100,000

5906 HIGHLAND HILLS TER
Listed at \$1,150,000

7005 EDGEFIELD DR
Listed at \$1,149,000

6011 MARQUESA DR
Listed at \$1,189,000

8419 ADIRONDACK TRL
Listed at \$1,150,000

5804 HIGHLAND PASS
Listed at \$1,350,000

4220 LOSTRIDGE DR
Listed at \$1,390,000

7608 RUSTLING RD
Listed at \$1,450,000

5808 GENTLE BREEZE TER
Listed at \$1,600,000

4008 GREENHILL PL
Listed at \$1,750,000

6902 MESA DR
Listed at \$1,850,000

CALL FOR INFORMATION ON FINAL SOLD PRICING

SOURCE: ABOR MLS



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YOU'RE INVITED!

The Singing Men of Texas are coming to Austin Baptist Church! This group of more than 200 ministers of music and leaders are excited to present an evening of worship. The Singing Men are known around the world and have performed in numerous countries over the past 13 years. Come join us for an evening of worship and praise! Admission is FREE and we have a seat saved just for you!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5TH
7:00 PM* - 8:30 PM

**Orchestral prelude begins at 6:45*

Scan the QR code for more information or visit us online.



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Happy 102nd Birthday to local Four Points WW II Marine

By RYLIE LOCKERMAN
Four Points News

On September 9, laughter, testimonials and reminiscing filled the Forty Acres Hall at Longhorn Village in celebration of resident Orville Brauss. Following a life of serving in the Marine Corps during World War II and the Korean War, Brauss is surrounded by beloved friends and family for his 102 birthday.

Brauss fulfilled a life of adventure, love and service to his home country. In 1942, he joined the Marine Corps, was given the title of Captain and Company Commander, and later went on to serve in war as well as be present in the first Okinawa invasion. His command stretched until the Korean War came to an end in 1953.

"I really wasn't in uniform all that long. I was in and out," Brauss said. "I enjoyed my work in the Marine Corps. I really did."

Upon his arrival at Longhorn Village, Brauss took part in activities including detailed pencil-line drawing, and he was a member of their "Sip and Sing" band as a drummer. To include a musical element in the celebration, a few residents brought ukuleles to play for him. Additional songs were performed by close friends and residents such as "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" and "It's a Sin to Tell a Lie".

Brauss is Longhorn Village's oldest resident.

"Orville is such a joy to have around," said Elizabeth, a Longhorn Village employee. "I love it when he attends all of our activities. For the most part he is a real trooper about it, so it's just a joy to have him with us. We love him."

Prior to joining the Marine Corps, Brauss' passion for baseball was reflected in his college scholarships to both the University of Atlanta Georgia, and the University of Missouri. After college, he worked for an oil company which required an immense amount of traveling. At 63 years old, Brauss retired and eventually moved to Longhorn Village.

"It has been a long time but he really has appreciated all the support he's got here at Longhorn Village and both independent and over in the skilled nursing," said John Brauss, son of Orville Brauss. "He's surprised that everybody showed up. I think he recognizes a few faces but it gets harder as the years start to add up." As a gift from his loved ones, a large birthday card was made, plastered with photos from his past, significant timestamps, and specially written notes.

"Those are very memorable pictures. It has all of the pictures of my true life," said the honorary Brauss. "I love it, I just love it and I thank everyone very much [who signed my card]. My lovely wife passed away about eight years ago, and everything is right as it was, just very excellent."

Texas Veterans Hall of Fame representative, Diana Mason, presented Brauss with the prestigious award that congratulated and honored him for being an honorably discharged Veteran who served as both Captain and Company Commander and has been a resident of Texas for more than seven years.

"Our mission with the Texas Veterans Hall of Fame is to honor all Texas veterans for their service, sacrifice and accomplishments," Mason said. "That's what this is all about. It is housed in Denton, Tex. and preserves the history and stories of our Texas Veterans and that's where his story becomes important. It is my honor to present Orville with his Patriot Award."

In St. Louis on June 7, 1947, Brauss married his wife who would have been 65 years if not for her passing. They went on to have three boys, one girl, and were constantly traveling to new locations to live in.

"He is a wonderful father, a leader in every aspect of his life," daughter of Brauss, Beth Brauss, said. "He was a leader in Boy Scouts and baseball for my brothers. Always cheered me on in all of my activities."



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Planning Commission Passes on District 10 Historic Zoning Recommendation

By ELIZABETH PAGANO
Austin Monitor

A bid for historic zoning in Old West Austin left the Planning Commission divided at their most recent meeting.

Owners of the Griffin House at 2502 Jarratt Ave. are seeking a historic designation that will protect the home from changes and offer tax abatement in return. Planning commissioners remained split evenly, so the zoning case will move on without a recommendation from the body.

The building is an example of the 1930s' colonial-revival style of architecture. In addition, the

house was once home to Judge Meade F. Griffin, who served on both the Texas Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals and was the Texas assistant attorney general, and Dorothy Griffin, who was a prominent figure in the child welfare movement and credited with the relocation of Save the Children from Dallas to Austin. The house was determined eligible for landmark zoning in 2016 by then-Historic Preservation Officer Steve Sadowsky.

Though there have been several alterations to the structure over the years, Historic Preservation Officer Kalan Contreras told the commission that the home continued to convey the 1930s style in a manner deserving of landmarking. Because the changes to the home were approved by the preservation office and done to the rear and side of the house, she said, they did not impact the overall architectural form, which retains its historic features.

Kristina Kupferschmid, who prepared the application for historic zoning, told commissioners that the building retains the original form, plan

and massing of the historic building. She explained that the owner decided to move forward with historic zoning to help play a part in preserving Old West Austin. Though the home is in a National Register historic district, that designation offers little protection to its historic fabric, practically speaking.

"She's seen a number of old houses in the historic district demolished and replaced with new houses. On her street, something like 10 historic houses have been demolished and replaced with new houses since the historic district was designated in 2003," said Kupferschmid. "I don't think this is an extremely rare type of house in Austin, but I do think these types of houses are getting demolished, especially in Old West Austin."

Despite the endorsement from city preservation staff and unanimous support from Historic Landmark commissioners, Planning Commissioner Awais Azhar remained concerned about the changes to the home over the years and said that he could not support historic landmarking.

"This is a massively altered structure," said Azhar. He said he was worried "opening a door" to flimsy preservation cases in the future, saying it did not have the degree of integrity seen in other cases and that the colonial revival style "had been lost" over the years.

Commissioner Grayson Cox noted that the house, from the street, looked almost the same as

it did in 2016.

"I feel like us making a judgment as to which aesthetic components somehow disqualify the house against all of the people who are actually experts in historic preservation and serve on our historic commission – it just seems kind of odd to me," he said.

In her remarks, Commissioner Felicity Maxwell said that she was glad that the issue of equity was raised at the meeting.

"Obviously, Austin has a lot of history. We have managed to preserve some parts of it much better than others," she said. "While I appreciate that the owners have thoughtfully brought this forward, I do really just want to raise the fact that if this was in a different place or of a slightly different style, this might not be something we would consider, necessarily."

In two votes, Planning commissioners remained split on historic zoning for the property, with Commissioners João Paulo Connolly, Alice Woods, Greg Anderson, Patrick Howard, Maxwell, and Azhar voting against and Nadia Barrera-Ramirez abstaining from the vote. The case will now proceed to City Council without a recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.



Owners of the Griffin House at 2502 Jarratt Ave. are seeking a historic designation. Photo by HHM via the city of Austin

Researchers will Seek Relatives of Long-lost Oakwood Cemetery Residents

By ANDREW WEBER
KUT

City officials say genetic testing of 35 Austinites buried at Oakwood Cemetery more than a century and a half ago is done, and researchers could be ready to test possible descendants of those people as soon as next year.

City staff discovered the bodies of 36 people under the Oakwood Chapel during a renovation in 2016. The remains were interred there long before the chapel was constructed in 1914, when the graves were paved over.

Of the 36 people exhumed, six were Black, six were white, seven were Hispanic and one was presumed Asian, according to an initial analysis

by Texas State University. The others were not able to be immediately identified, and researchers could not reliably test one of the 36.

The bodies were reinterred in 2021.

The city's Parks and Recreation Department has partnered with the University of Connecticut to identify descendants of the people buried at the cemetery, which is as old as the city itself.

At a public hearing on September 19, Samantha Archer, a University of Connecticut researcher, said the Oakwood project is one of the only projects in the country to ever try to identify descendants of people buried centuries ago.

"This is really pushing at the boundaries of

what has been possible only within the last couple of years," she said. "And, so, if we do find a family link, this would be one of the first studies to do that. And we would be part of ... trying to figure out what happens then."

Archer said the project needed to be OK'd by UConn, then researchers would begin to solicit DNA samples next year from people who believe they may be related to those buried at the site.

If you are interested in participating in the project, you can find more information and sign up for updates at the PARD website.

This story was produced as part of the Austin Monitor's reporting partnership with KUT.



The Oakwood Chapel during renovations in 2017. Photo by Gabriel C. Pérez/KUT

"After living in our Northwest Hills home in Austin for almost 50 years, health conditions were such that we needed to give up our two story home and move. The idea was daunting! After such a long time living in one place, we weren't sure we knew how to move!

We have known Dawn for quite a while and chose her to handle our sale. She was wonderful, seeing to every detail, explaining (with a lot of patience) every paragraph of the contract, In processing the paperwork, she was attentive and very efficient. She was also very helpful in referring us to the best estate sale company to conduct the sale of things we could not take with us.

We got rave reviews from some close friends that Dawn had handled their sale as well several years ago, so we felt assured that she would do the same great job for us. She kept us up to date as the process unfolded so we always knew where things stood.

Equally as important, Dawn's expertise and advice along the way greatly reduced the level of stress we had feared in getting this done. For that, alone, we are truly grateful! In addition, our buyer was also very impressed with Dawn.

Needless to say, we will highly recommend Dawn to anyone that needs a Realtor."

~Bonnie and Tom Smith



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